

Attachment 2: Draft SALC Guidelines Comment Compilation

Overview

- A total of 13 people attended the webinar (excluding DOC & SGC) on March 2, 2017.
- A total of 8 comments/questions were received during the webinar
- A total of 4 comment(s) were submitted by letter, email and/or by phone
- Organization distribution: 6 land trusts, 5 local governments and 1 business-land trust partnership.

A total of 12 comments and questions were received for this year's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC Program) draft Guidelines. Comments and questions were received from 6 different land trusts, local governments, and business-land trust partnership.

General: 3 comments

Three comments were related to the amount of funding and final dates for SALCP Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) applications and preproposals.

SALCP Agricultural Conservation Easements

The comments on the Agricultural Conservation Easements section are broken down into 4 categories: Disadvantaged Communities (DAC), Risk Options, Eligibility and Selection Criteria, and Other Requirements.

DAC: 4 comments

One comment states that the two DAC benefits which were removed should be reconsidered for inclusion again. These benefits were those that provided recruitment, agreements, policies resulting in 25% of project work hours performed by DAC residents or 10% of project work hours performed by DAC residents participating in job training. The commentor also suggested that the training and employment of DAC residents provided on the agricultural conservation easement be considered a DAC benefit. These benefits provide valuable opportunities for funding projects in disadvantaged communities.

One comment requested clarification of what meets DAC funding criteria, suggesting that the SALC Program consider the next generation of farmers under the DAC funding criteria.

One comment related to whether a specific town qualified for DAC, where this information could be found, and how DAC funding could be obtained.

One comment suggested that DACs be exempt from the Program's match requirement.

Risk Options: 4 comments

One comment related to the risk options indicated that the quantification methodology ignores the land's current GHG sequestration value and instead only assesses potential future avoidance.

The second comment recommended that the SALC Program protect land before it is at risk of conversion, which would allow for the purchase of greater acreage at a lower price, thereby maximizing the effect of available funding on the conservation of land.

The third comment recommended that the SALC Program consider that wildlife habitat is better on rangeland and pastureland than is on heavily cultivated agricultural land.

The fourth comment recommended that two additional factors be considered as risk options for GHG quantification - Commercial Development Risk and Industrial Development Risk.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria: 7 comments

One comment indicated that, due to drought and pests, some agricultural land in San Diego is not currently in production but has been in production in the past. The commentor recommended that agricultural lands not currently in production, but that have been in production in the past, be considered eligible for an ACE.

One comment stated that San Diego County's cultural, environmental and economic interests are to preserve small agricultural operations and recommended that SGC clarify ACE eligibility and selection criteria to allow for the acquisition of smaller parcels.

One comment recommended that the Guidelines clarify whether ACEs that are a part of a mitigation credit program, such as San Diego County's PACE Program, are eligible for SALC Program funding.

One comment stated that San Diego County recently adopted an updated General Plan in which a number of parcels have been deemed "legal and non-conforming." Because these parcels are smaller than the minimum zoning allowed, they are ineligible for grant funding under the current Guidelines. As such the commentor recommended amending the minimum zoning requirement to allow for those lands that are recognized as "legal and non-conforming" to be eligible for selection.

One comment recommended that in the criterion "the property [be] adjacent to other permanently protected property..." the word "adjacent" be replaced with "within strategic proximity to" in order to make the criterion less binary and provide flexibility for high priority projects that are not directly adjacent to protected property.

One comment recommended that the language, "In most circumstances, the applicant will become the holder of the agricultural conservation easement..." be removed from the Guidelines to permit a broader range of applications submitted under the Program. The comment states that other state agencies allow applicants to assign their interest in

an easement to a conservation entity through an Assignment and Assumption Agreement and would like a similar allowance explicitly outlined in the SALC Program Guidelines.

One comment stated approval for the revised selection criteria consideration of properties with severed mineral rights or those within flood zones.

Other Requirements: 5 comments:

One comment recommended that a better definition of the restrictions of agricultural husbandry practices within the easement be outlined.

One comment identified the importance of this program's funding in significantly reducing potential GHG emissions.

One comment recommended that water conservation, through on site efficiencies, groundwater recharge, flood control, or recycling of urban wastewater be added back into the co benefits.

Another comment suggested that the Guidelines make more explicit room for circumstances in which substantial GHG emission reductions or water quality improvements can be made via targeted wetland establishment and/or riparian buffer strip protection under an easement. The comment stated the Guidelines should clarify that the easement does not mean to exclude projects that include wildlife, water, and carbon best management practices on working lands.

One comment recommended that "Commercial Agricultural Production" be defined and included within Appendix A-Glossary.

Strategy and Outcome Grants: 1 comment, 1 question

One question requested clarification of when funding would be received and the deliverables that have to be met in order to receive reimbursement.

One comment recommended that consideration be given to communities that don't have the resources to pay for planning prior to policy adoption.